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**Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council**

## Letter dated 18 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

It is my honour to inform you that the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015 for the seats allocated to the African States at the elections to be held in November 2012.

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has the honour to transmit its statement of voluntary pledges and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Tekeda **Alemu**
Ambassador

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## Annex to the letter dated 18 October 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

## Candidature of Ethiopia to the Human Rights Council, 2013-2015

### Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. Ethiopia, a founding member of the United Nations, is now for the first time a candidate for membership in the Human Rights Council, for the period 2013-2015. Its candidature has been endorsed by the African Union.

2. Ethiopia firmly believes in the universality, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the United Nations and all other international human rights instruments.

3. Ethiopia upholds the highest standards of human rights as enshrined in the Constitution of the country and in the international and regional human rights treaties that Ethiopia has ratified. It is a party to major international treaties and the core international human rights instruments.

4. Ethiopia attaches great importance to the principles of equality, non-discrimination, mutual respect and tolerance and active grass-roots participation. In an effort to promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights, Ethiopia has undertaken extensive administrative, policy and legislative reforms, with a view to ensuring that its laws, policies and practices conform to international human rights standards.

5. Ethiopia has been playing an active role in the promotion of regional and international peace and security as well as in the strengthening of the rule of law and good governance and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national level.

6. Ethiopia has contributed to international peacekeeping for more than 50 years. Currently, Ethiopia is contributing the greatest number of troops of any country in Africa to United Nations peacekeeping missions.

7. Ethiopia reaffirms its strong support for the work of the United Nations human rights system and continues to actively participate in all its activities in the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly.

8. Ethiopia has made important contributions to the establishment and strengthening of the Human Rights Council.

9. Ethiopia was a member of the Commission on Human Rights during the periods 1980-1982, 1986-1991, 1995-1997 and 2004-2006 and constructively contributed during its tenure to the advancement of the work of the United Nations human rights system.

10. It is in this context that Ethiopia voluntarily makes the pledges and commitments, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251, listed below.

*International contributions, pledges and commitments*

11. Consistent with its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, Ethiopia is a party to the following core regional and international human rights instruments:

- International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- International Convention against Apartheid in Sports
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

12. Ethiopia is also a party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the first two additional protocols thereto, to other international humanitarian law instruments and to international instruments administered by the International Labour Organization.

13. The Government of Ethiopia pledges to take the necessary measures to expedite the ratification of the following human rights treaties:

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

14. Ethiopia is fully committed to the innovative initiative of the universal periodic review within the Human Rights Council. Accordingly, Ethiopia submitted its national report to the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review in 2009 following extensive national consultations with all stakeholders. Ethiopia has taken steps to disseminate the results of the review and has undertaken national consultations on the implementation of the recommendations, including through the drawing up of a national human rights action plan that was elaborated by a national

consultative process with the active participation of the national Human Rights Commission of Ethiopia. Ethiopia is expected to be reviewed in 2014.

15. Ethiopia is committed to an open and constructive engagement in the robust universal periodic review procedure, including reporting on measures taken to follow up on its recommendations. Ethiopia will continue to work with all members of the Human Rights Council in an open and constructive dialogue and endeavour to implement recommendations.

16. Ethiopia has been reviewed by the African Peer Review Mechanism and has adopted an implementation plan for its recommendations.

17. Ethiopia supports the system of special procedures of the United Nations human rights system and is committed to cooperating with the respective special mechanisms. Ethiopia has received visits from the mandate holders of the Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Accordingly, on the invitation of the Government of Ethiopia, the Special Rapporteur on the adverse effects of the movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, the Independent Expert on minority issues and the Special Rapporteur of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on prisons and conditions of detention in Africa have visited the country.

18. In 2012, the Chairs of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies met in Addis Ababa, their first meeting outside of Geneva. In the course of their stay in Addis Ababa they consulted with senior officials of the Government of Ethiopia on ways to further enhance their constructive engagement and on measures taken by the Government of Ethiopia on the implementation of various human rights treaties.

19. Ethiopia is committed to continuing its cooperation with the reporting and monitoring system of the treaty bodies of the United Nations. Ethiopia has submitted its reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and has participated actively and constructively during the discussions of the reports.

20. Ethiopia adheres to its reporting obligations to implement the recommendations of treaty bodies. As an integral part of the country's commitment to implement relevant recommendations and concluding observations by national, regional and international human rights bodies, Ethiopia commits to incorporating the implementation of those recommendations into its national human rights action plan. Moreover, Ethiopia has established a national steering committee, consisting of federal ministries and regional bureaux, other relevant Government offices, national human rights institutions and civil society groups, to prepare the action plan. The steering committee has finalized the preparation of the action plan.

21. Ethiopia has always been a strong supporter of the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Ethiopia is closely working and collaborating with the East Africa Regional Office of OHCHR in Addis Ababa on wide-ranging issues of human rights. Ethiopia commits to further collaboration with OHCHR to enhance its cooperation with and assistance to the Office by further improving the existing working environment to discharge its mandate.

22. Ethiopia is an active participant in the meetings of the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Ethiopia commits to further enhancing its active participation, including by submitting proposals and organizing events aimed at promoting fundamental human rights and freedoms. Ethiopia participates and plays an active role in the process of setting the standards of human rights instruments of the African Union and the United Nations.

23. Ethiopia believes that non-governmental organizations can play a vital role in the promotion and protection of human rights. Ethiopia commits to meaningful engagement with non-governmental organizations in the preparation of national reports and during sessions of the Human Rights Council.

*National contributions, pledges and commitments*

24. Ethiopia is strongly committed to the full and free exercise of peoples' rights to self-determination and to building a political community founded on the rule of law and capable of ensuring lasting peace, guaranteeing a democratic order and advancing the country's economic and social development. The Government of Ethiopia is also firmly convinced that the country's sustained development and growth and continued maintenance of peace and security are firmly grounded on the full respect for individual and peoples' fundamental freedoms and rights.

25. As part of the country's commitment to advance human rights, Ethiopia has established the national Human Rights Commission and the Institution of the Ombudsman, both accountable to the Parliament.

26. Ethiopia is implementing a five-year growth and transformation plan (2010/11-2014/15) to lift the country out of poverty, achieve the Millennium Development Goals, ensure rapid, sustainable and equitable economic growth, build capacity, deepen good governance, promote gender and youth empowerment and equity and enhance the expansion and quality of social development, among other goals.

27. Ethiopia reaffirms its commitment to the full realization of all rights enshrined under international and regional human rights instruments. The Constitution of Ethiopia guarantees equality of all persons before the law and their entitlement without any discrimination to equal protection by the law. The Constitution obliges all laws of the country to guarantee all persons equal and effective protection without discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, wealth, birth or other status. Any law or practice that contravenes that Constitutional provision is null and void.

28. Basic human rights instruments ratified by Ethiopia are parts of the laws of the country. Any laws, practices or decisions inconsistent with or that contravene those instruments are null and void. Ethiopia has registered remarkable progress in the promotion and protection of human rights, with special emphasis on women, children and marginalized groups and communities. The policies and strategies of the country are carefully crafted to align with the country's national and international human rights obligations. Ethiopia is committed to upholding the highest standard of human rights.